

# Florence County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan

## Planning Summary

### Authorization of the Comprehensive Plan

Preparation of comprehensive plans for Florence County and six local communities is authorized under Wisconsin State Statutes 59.69 and 66.1001 (Smart Growth). Florence County entered into a contract with the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (Bay-Lake RPC) to prepare the county as well as local comprehensive plans. The planning process began in November 2008.

### Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to identify and assure sensible growth and development, and conservation over the next 20 years. Comprehensive plans allow officials to make specific recommendations regarding such issues as environmental protection, infrastructure development, transportation, housing types and densities, land use patterns, and economic development. The adopted plan provides the policy and guidance from which the county and local communities will base their future land use decisions.

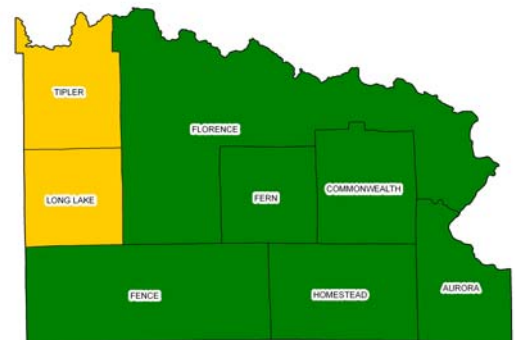
### Florence County Comprehensive Plan Process

The county is using a bottom-up approach to develop the Florence County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan. Six out of the eight towns in the county are developing local town comprehensive plans. Once the six local plans are developed, they will be referenced in the completion of the county's comprehensive plan. The Florence County Planning Advisory Committee (FCPAC) is the responsible entity to advise the planning staff in the development of the 10 chapters, which will comprise the *Florence County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*.

The first phase of completing the county plan included several components: a nominal group and visioning exercise, Economic SWOT workshops, presentation and review of the county background resources, and a mid-point "Open House".

In November, 2008 a Nominal Group Exercise was conducted with members of the FCPAC and other interested individuals to identify current and future development and community issues. Some of the major concerns mentioned by the group at this meeting included:

- Maintain and improve appearance of community
- More economic development to maintain the younger population
- Road system needs improvement (less funds, greater costs)
- Encourage timber harvesting best management practices
- Fix declining school population
- Fix declining volunteer fire department



- Towns preparing individual plans
- Towns not preparing individual plans

### Florence County Statistics

- Land area – 495 square miles
- Population (2000) – 5,088
- Population estimate (2010) – 5,273
- Total housing units (2000) – 4,239
- Seasonal housing units (2000) – 1,959
- Owner occupied housing units (2000) – 1,828
- Median value owner occupied units (2000) - \$82,200
- Median household income (1999) - \$34,750

Two separate Economic SWOT Workshops were held to identify the county's greatest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The first workshop was held in January as part of a larger regional economic study. Approximately 18 people participated in the discussion. The second workshop was held in March with members of the FCPAC.

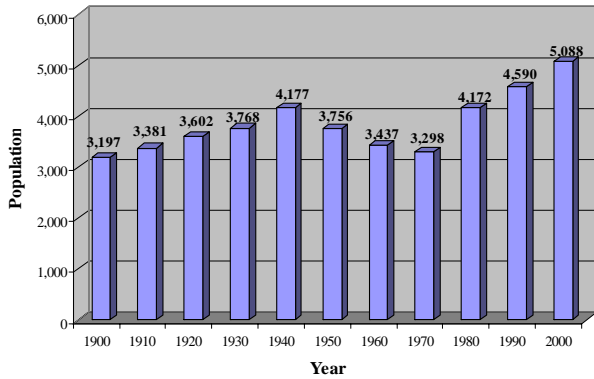
The county background text (Volume II: County Resources) was presented to and reviewed by the FCPAC and communities within the county over the course of several months. Those chapters include Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources; Population and Housing; Economic Development; Transportation; and Utilities and Community Facilities.

The mid-point "Open House" was held in June 2009, where all the above information was available for public review and comment. The results from the different components, plus future Intergovernmental Cooperation Workshops and other public input received during the planning process will be referenced by the FCPAC to complete the county's comprehensive plan.

Bay-Lake RPC staff started the planning process with the towns of Aurora, Commonwealth, Fence, Fern, Florence, and Homestead in May 2009 to develop their own comprehensive plans. Before adoption town and county plans will be presented to the public for comment and a second open house will be held. The adoption of the local comprehensive plans is anticipated in late 2009 and the county comprehensive plan in early 2010.

## Population

### Florence County Historic Population Levels



- From 1980 to 2000, the county's population has experienced several shifts in its age distribution, generally showing a trend towards older age groups. The most significant indicator of this is the decrease in the number of individuals between the ages of 20 and 29. In 1980, this group accounted for 12 percent of the county's population. By 2000, this group's representation dropped to 7 percent.
- The county's median age has risen from 32.3 years in 1970 to 41.9 years in 2000.

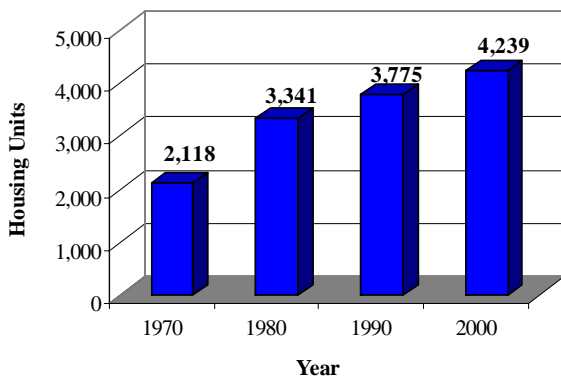
### Florence County Population Projections

- 2008 Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) population projections:

<b>2005</b> – 5,223	<b>2020</b> – 5,373
<b>2010</b> – 5,273	<b>2025</b> – 5,378
<b>2015</b> – 5,333	<b>2030</b> – 5,340

## Housing

### Florence County Historic Housing Trend



- According to the 2000 Census, one unit detached structures comprised nearly 83 percent of the total housing types in Florence County.

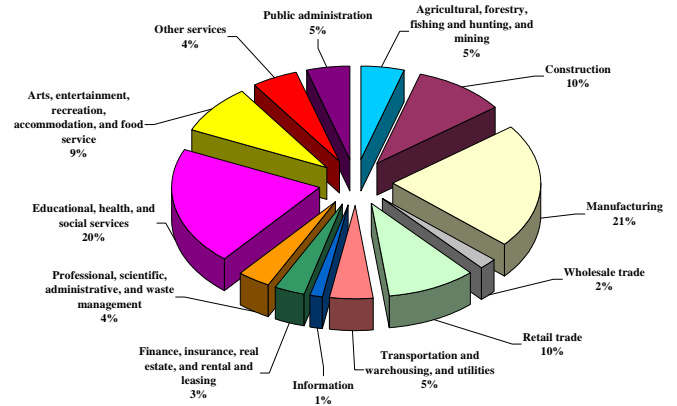
### Florence County Housing Unit Projections

- According to WDOA projections, the total number of occupied (owner & rental) housing units in the county is

projected to increase from 2,133 in 2000 to 2,668 in 2030.

## Economic Development

- The 1999 Median Household Income in Florence County was \$34,750. This is a 52 percent increase from the 1989 figure of \$22,927.
- The following figure indicates the percent of county residents working in each of the major industry groups as of 2000.



- In 2000, nearly 22 percent of employed county residents worked in manufacturing followed closely by educational, health and social services industry at 20 percent.

## Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources

- A large percentage of water used by municipalities and in homes in Florence County comes from groundwater. The Town of Florence has 4 municipal wells that supply water to its residents. All other residents receive their water from private wells.
- Florence County has 17 significant natural areas and two State Wild River designations.
- Florence County has approximately 286,035 acres of woodlands. Federal constitutes approximately 84,474 acres and County approximately 36,670 acres. A total of 72,033 acres are enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program.
- According to the USDA, in 2007 Florence County had 115 farms with a total of 20,264 acres. The average farm size was 176 acres.
- Between 2002 and 2007, 190 acres of land in the county was converted from agricultural to non-agricultural uses, while 345 acres was converted out of forestry use.

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